GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1972
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2011
HIV TESTING SYSTEMS
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the prevalent testing systems to detect the presence of HIV among the people in the country;

(b) whether the Government proposes to introduce Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) which can help in decreasing the HIV incidence rate by identifying persons with acute infection; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a) The prevalent testing system for testing all individuals above the age of 18 months is done by antibody testing using rapid or Enzyme linked immune sorbent assay (ELISA). The same is done using serial testing with three kits of different antigens and/or principles. In children less than 18 months screening is done using DNA PCR testing which is confirmed by antibody testing as mentioned above at the age of 18 months or above.

(b) & (c) NAT testing is not proposed as a diagnostic test and it does not reduce HIV incidence. It is cost intensive and requires technical support which cannot be provided beyond tertiary care hospital setups and most of our testing facilities are beyond tertiary care hospitals.